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Navy & Marine Corps Medical News

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This service distributes medical news and information to Sailors and Marines, their families, civilian employees, and retired Navy and Marine Corps families. Further dissemination of this email is highly encouraged.

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Headline: Beaufort opens women's imaging center
From Naval Hospital Beaufort

BEAUFORT, S.C. -- Out-patient service and non-surgical breast biopsies are just two benefits the Women's Imaging Center will offer after its opening in November at Naval Hospital Beaufort.

After a non-surgical breast biopsy is performed, the Center ensures that results are available within 24 to 72 hours, which eases the anxiety of women waiting to hear the news. In addition to having all of the elements for minimally invasive diagnosis of breast cancer, the facility moves beyond pure clinical analysis to meet the educational and emotional needs of its patients.

"As we enter a new era in breast care, with more patient education and involvement, out-patient non-surgical biopsy and improved diagnostic techniques, our services must broaden to meet the patient's expanding needs," said CAPT Clint Adams, MC, Naval Hospital Beaufort commanding officer.

The Women's Imaging Center meets those concerns. It will have the tools to perform screening and digital diagnostic mammography, breast ultrasound and core biopsies, as well as pelvic and obstetrical ultrasound.

Women using the center will not have to rely solely on a doctor's examination for information. Other planned

resources include a breast care hotline for quick access to information, an interactive computer to teach breast self-examination, a lending library of books and videos on women's health issues, and a support group for women diagnosed with breast cancer. Patients will be able to visit the Radiology Division web site at www-nmimc.med.navy.mil/beaufort/radiology/radweb.html.

This site has links to the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Decision Guide and Breast Cancer Awareness and Solutions Network. Another benefit of these sites is interactive patient consultations.

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Headline: Program helps children with learning disabilities
By Bill Doughty, U.S. Naval Hospital, Yokusuka

YOKUSUKA, Japan -- When a military member or Department of Defense employee's child is diagnosed with learning disabilities, parents and teachers have a resource for assistance in the Educational and Developmental Intervention Services organization. The organization provides early intervention and medical services programs for children from birth to 21 years of age.

EDIS-Japan, an organization comprising pediatric-trained psychologists, speech, language and occupational therapists, social workers and early childhood educators, among others, has about 22,000 annual patient contacts. The EDIS-Japan group is the largest in the Department of Defense and has 65 providers spread across 1,500 miles of the Japanese mainland.

LCDR Anthony Doran, MSC, child psychologist and head of EDIS at the Iwakuni, Japan Branch Medical Clinic, said a successful program relies on the close interaction between EDIS and Department of Defense Dependents Schools. He said that when it comes to children with learning disabilities, EDIS and DoDDS professionals must understand each other's needs and interests to work together effectively.

The EDIS program is made more effective with the quality of contact provided to its users. In the classroom, teachers are consulted about a child's needs. In the home, interviews with parents increase information about the child and emphasize the user-friendly approach of the program.

Family member Gwen Newhart, whose husband Terry is a Senior Chief Gas Turbine Systems Technician based at Yokusuka, praised the EDIS program and the difference it made to her child's quality of life. She has used the program's speech assistance benefit for her four year-old son, Zachery, since October 1996.

"If parents have concerns about their child, there is somewhere they can go to get help and answers. It has enabled my son to communicate better and be more confident. It has really helped his self-esteem to be able to do more things, just like other kids his own age."

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Headline: "Ask A Nurse First" call center improves patient care

From Naval Hospital Jacksonville

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- Patient care services at Naval Hospital Jacksonville and the Jacksonville area branch medical clinics are greatly enhanced with the addition of the "Ask A Nurse First" call center.

The center is staffed with specially trained registered nurses, who use a computerized triage system to advise beneficiaries calling with questions about their need for immediate medical care.

The nurses use guidelines that have been approved by physicians to provide health information and advice based on the nature and severity of a caller's condition.

When a patient calls, the nurse questions them about their health history such as allergies, medications being taken and past or current medical conditions. Based on the answers, the nurse will help decide when and if a patient needs to see a health care provider. The nurse may be able to provide home care advice that could save patients an unnecessary trip to the hospital. If a patient needs to see their health care provider the advice nurse will provide instructions on how to manage the problem while waiting.

There are some added benefits for TRICARE Prime beneficiaries enrolled at Naval Hospital Jacksonville and Branch Medical Clinic Mayport. The call center nurses can assist callers in getting appointments for urgent problems, and a record of the call will be provided to patients' Primary Care Manager.

The Ask A Nurse First Call Center, which is available 24-hours a day, is an important part of Naval Hospital Jacksonville's TRICARE goal of providing the best service possible to hospital beneficiaries.

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Headline: Navy dentistry enhances readiness and smiles

By Tanya Brown, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

WASHINGTON -- Smiling through the pain is what LCPL Twyla Dunaway did for most of her life. With badly decayed teeth, huge cavities and a hypersensitive mouth, smiling became more of a pain than a pleasure -- until she came to the Navy.

"[My teeth] were really bad," said Dunaway. "You name it and it was wrong."

But aside from her appearance, Dunaway's poor dental condition hindered her from doing her job properly, because the slightest bit of air caused intense pain.

"It effects the quality of life and time away from your job," said CAPT Lawrence McKinley, DC, director of operations for the Dental Corps at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Washington, D.C.

To keep military personnel dentally healthy and to decrease the number of jobs that are affected by dental emergencies, Navy Dentistry has set a goal of "Navy Dentistry Through and Beyond Dental Readiness." Dentally ready Sailors and Marines are categorized as Class I (healthy mouth, with no treatment needed), or Class II (has active dental disease, such as dental decay, that will not cause any problems within the next 12 months). Class III rates a person as not dentally ready, with dental disease that could cause a dental emergency and affect job performance.

Since 1996, the number of Navy and Marine Corps personnel having Class I or II dental ratings rose from 82 percent to 90 percent as of July 1998.

"We have spent decades keeping people dentally ready," said CAPT Chuck Spann, DC, Head of the Managed Care Branch at BUMED.

Navy dental has one of the most up-to-date rosters of active military personnel and each person is contacted annually to schedule a check-up appointment.

"We just don't sit back and wait for people to come to us," Spann said.

In 1997, the Department of Defense provided Navy dentistry the resources to raise the standard of dentally ready military personnel to 95 percent. That goal is now within reach.

"We are aiming for a Navy that is in the dental Class I division," said McKinley. "No dental treatment will be needed."

Today Dunaway is dentally rated a Class I Marine. After numerous dental visits, and several root canals and crowns, Dunaway can now do her job and smile painlessly.

"My family was astonished," she said. "[The dentists] did a really good job."

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Headline: Jacksonville personnel train to deploy
By Teresa White, Naval Hospital Jacksonville, Public Affairs Office

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- Last month, Naval Hospital Jacksonville sent 244 staff members to Camp Pendleton, Calif., for extensive training for the hospital's deployable medical unit, Fleet Hospital Jacksonville.

The unit is a mobile medical hospital that supports Fleet Marine Forces and ships in operational areas around the world. The unit can also assist in civilian humanitarian health care situations.

While active duty staff were training in the California desert, quality health care remained constant for the hospital's patients. Naval Reserve doctors, nurses and corpsmen provided support in various areas throughout the facility, thereby ensuring patients' needs were met.

Naval Hospital Jacksonville and Naval Reserve Readiness

Command, Region Eight, joined forces under the Integrated Medical Support Plan to replace the deploying active duty staff with reserve medical professionals. As staff deployed from the hospital, reservists arrived in their place and performed the duties of the active duty member. Each reservist was already trained to perform the duties of their active duty counterpart to ensure a smooth transition.

Although Fleet Hospital Jacksonville has only been in existence for a year, the unit's standard of training is excellent. Evaluators at Camp Pendleton said Jacksonville facility has set a new standard for fleet hospitals.

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Headline: Some retirees selected for federal health benefits test

By Douglas J. Gillert, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- The Federal Employees Health Benefits Program will be opened to military retirees on a test basis now that President Clinton has signed the fiscal 1999 National Defense Authorization Act into public law.

The act calls for a three-year demonstration beginning Jan. 1, 2000. Some 66,000 military retirees and eligible family members over age 65, who qualify for Medicare health benefits, will participate in the pilot program. Under current law, military retirees are eligible for military health care only on a space-available basis.

DoD designed the demonstration and Congress approved giving military health care beneficiaries access to the federal employees' plan after they turn 65. Officials said the test will be held at six to 10 locations. After the test sites are selected, eligible retirees will be contacted, most likely by mail, officials said.

The demonstration will complement TRICARE Senior Prime, another trial DoD launched recently. Senior Prime allows a limited number of over-65 retirees and eligible family members to sign up for military health care at six locations. Senior Prime runs through Dec. 31, 2000. Defense health officials hope the demonstration will show that DoD can provide Medicare-eligible beneficiaries with cost-effective health care through military medical facilities.

For more information on federal employee health benefits, visit the Office of Personnel Management Web site at <http://www.opm.gov>

For more TRICARE information, visit the Military Health System Web site at its new address, <http://hawww.ha.osd.mil>.

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Headline: TRICARE question and answer

Question: How do we obtain emergency care under TRICARE, and does the co-payment increase for the emergency room

visit?

Answer: Any eligible beneficiary should access the nearest emergency room of any military or civilian hospital for true emergencies, regardless of which TRICARE option you use.

There are no out-of-pocket costs for any care received at a military hospital, including emergency room care. The out-of-pocket costs for care received at a civilian emergency room for families of E-4 and below who are enrolled in TRICARE Prime is \$10. For families of E-5 and above and retirees and their families enrolled in TRICARE Prime, the copay for an emergency room visit is \$30. This single payment, \$10 or \$30, includes all emergency room services provided in conjunction with the visit. For those who have chosen to remain in TRICARE Standard, or use the TRICARE Extra program, their regular deductibles and co-payments apply.

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Headline: Healthwatch: Domestic Violence Awareness Month
From Secretary of the Navy

WASHINGTON -- Each year the President of the United States recognizes October as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. This year's military theme is "Domestic Violence Prevention: Today's choice for generations to come." This is a good opportunity for each of us to reaffirm our commitment to help eliminate domestic violence. Violence towards a spouse has long-term consequences for the victim, family members and the community. Unfortunately, children are often present and witness the harsh realities of such violence. Studies have shown that these same children tend to behave more aggressively, have more problems in school, and are at higher risk for juvenile arrest, substance abuse, and negative health outcomes. Our actions today can and will impact generations to come. Leadership, education, training, and awareness are the keys to eliminating domestic violence. All leaders within the department of the Navy should use all communication outlets available to inform people of the quality services available to assist families experiencing incidents of domestic violence. The Navy and Marine Corps family advocacy programs are committed to preventing domestic violence by providing training to commands, as well as supporting individuals and families. Increased public awareness of the complexity of the problem is the first step towards establishing a community climate that does not tolerate family violence.

All I need is your assistance to communicate that help is always available for victims, witnesses and offenders through our Navy and Marine Corps family advocacy programs and their military and civilian community partners. The National Domestic Violence Hotline can also provide helpful

information at 1-800-799-safe (7233).

For direct assistance and more information on what you, your command, and your community can do to stop the violence, contact your installation family advocacy program representatives at the nearest family service center, family advocacy center or medical treatment facility.

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Comments about and ideas for MEDNEWS are welcome. Story submissions are encouraged. Contact MEDNEWS editor, Earl Hicks, at email: mednews@us.med.navy.mil; Telephone 202/762-3223, (DSN) 762-3223, or fax 202/762-3224.

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